(c) and (d) At present the estimated cost of solar power generation is about Rs. 13 to Rs 15 per unit, which is high in comparison to power available from other sources.

The cost of solar energy systems have been reducing, however, it may take some more time for solar energy systems to become competitive to other sources of energy.

(e) The Government has been supporting research and development to reduce the cost of solar power through (i) improvements in the performance of existing solar devices (ii) reduction in the consumption of materials (iii) development of new materials and devices; (iv) development of grid interactive electronic systems etc. In addition, setting up of a solar thermal power generation and test facility is being supported.

The research efforts are aimed at reducing the cost of solar power to make them competitive to grid power in next 8-10 years.

Ethanol Blended Petrol

†949.SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:
Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had planned during the past few years to sell ethanol blended petrol, to increase the availability of petrol in the country and to keep its price in check;

(b) if so, when this plan was formulated and the percentage of ethanol that was to be mixed with petrol and under this plan, and when the decision in this regard was taken;

(c) whether the said plan has been executed in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, by when this plan is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JITIN PRASADA): (a) to (d) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas vide its Notification dated 20th September, 2006 has directed the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to sell 5% Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) subject to commercial viability in the entire country except North-Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshdweep with effect from 1st November, 2006.

At present 5% EBP programme is being implemented in 16 States and 3 UTs out of 20 States and 4 UTs identified for implementing the programme. Issues like availability of ethanol, State Excise procedures and taxation policy adopted by State Governments are coming in the way of smooth implementation of the programme nationwide.

Market share of OMCs and PSOCs

†950.SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:
Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi